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20 September 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Joint Computer Support

SUBJECT : ORACLE Audit - Personal Observations

I have a few general observations and recommendations about the ORACLE project which I am recording for your benefit. Some of these points were discussed at the meeting on the 18th. They are not really germane to the audit but I thought they might be useful.

STATINTL

A. About [REDACTED]

1. The technical people which are working on the project are very good. I have no doubt that given enough time, they could implement all of our requirements.
2. What they have developed to date has been well done. They have followed a good modular approach expending much effort in developing their own operating systems and data management facilities which in turn support the lower level application oriented processing.
3. While they are not following any standardized programming documentation procedures, the routines in general are described well, incorporate reasonable logic flow charts and include well commented listings.
4. They have made good progress since about December of last year. There seems to have been much wheel spinning between the time the contract was initiated, June 1973, and December 1973. Hiring problems probably contributed to this.
5. In private conversations with [REDACTED] programming people I am convinced, despite the usual self serving propaganda, that they think the system is sound and presents no insurmountable problems. I think that is important.

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6. They obviously underestimated the complexity of the required software, and we apparently concurred. They should have realized several months ago that they were in trouble.

7. They view the project as an R&D kind of effort. The fact that we're now referring to 'Releases' implies a level of effort implementation.

B. About OJCS Participation

1. I believe that before we make any additional commitments to the project, the office should reevaluate and hopefully reconfirm its desire to acquire such a system. I get the distinct impression that everyone considers it [REDACTED] system'. Unless it receives the full conscientious support of the front office, SED and OD, it will not succeed.

2. As an applications programmer I have no qualms about the ability of the system to backfill data sets in a reasonable period of time. I am concerned about the data base integrity and system recovery capabilities, or lack thereof, in the system. Once I put my eggs in that rather big basket I want to have reasonable guarantees that I am going to be able to access them.

3. I would suggest that an OJCS ORACLE review task team be formed to formally involve OPS and USD in preparing for this system and specifically to agree on Release 1 capabilities. [REDACTED] should retain overall responsibility for the project, but I believe he needs additional support and input from other office components.

4. I believe there should be formal status meetings with [REDACTED] every 4 to 6 weeks. I believe someone from your office should be in attendance.

5. We should insist on more stringent programming schedules from Ampex. Such schedules should include start and end dates and the names of the programmers involved.

6. If the manpower can be found, we should involve OJCS programmers as soon as possible in the implementation of such system features as MIS and security. These functions are going to be evolutionary in

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nature and as such can be supported more efficiently by in house personnel. It will, in addition, give us a better working knowledge of such support modules as SCPOS and DMS.

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Distribution:

- Orig. & 1 - Adse
- 1 - DD/OJCS
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The amount of effort required to 'complete' the project will depend, to a large extent, on the minimum sophistication which is acceptable to the Agency in the initial version. This will be specified in the forthcoming ^{MS} TBM2 Release 1 document.

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- What done - done well
- doc inadequate
- Not sophisticated system
- General concept proven
- no aspects completely done
- R D & E effort
- Hc level functions Specs
- ~~Documentation adequate~~

Have bought

- Some good Sw rel 2 & 3
- DHS good
- Some bad decisions - Mgmt
- Working on critical areas

4 Oct formal cost detail c to c
 wk 7th

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 Complete

- Mgmt - Better Mgmt -
 - = See what propose
 - = Renegotiate

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